



10 Good Apps and Sites for Creative Writing Assignments

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Developing fiction stories comes easily to some students. For others it can be a struggle to come up with ideas for fiction stories. The following resources can help you and your students develop fiction stories.

Things to Think About (<http://apple.co/1HclCzQ>) is a free iPad app that offers 100 writing prompts created by students for students. The prompts were created by 2nd through 5th grade students in Jackson County, Michigan. The app itself was built by two high school students in the same county. Things to Think About has writing prompts spread across twelve categories. Each prompt has a picture drawn by a student. A short audio recording of a student reading each prompt can be heard through the app too.

StoryToolz (<http://www.storytoolz.com>) offers a nice collection of useful tools for writers. Writers who are struggling to come up with ideas for fiction stories will like the story starters featured on StoryToolz. StoryToolz has three tools that you can use to get story ideas; Random Conflicts, Half Title Generator, and Story Idea Generator. To use any of these three tools just select the tool from the main menu then look at the randomly generated story idea. If you don't like the options, run the tool again until you get options that you do like.

Write About This (<http://bitly.com/WATF1>) is an iPad app (free and paid versions available) containing visual, text, voice writing prompts for students. Students can respond to the writing prompts they see by writing directly in the app or anywhere else that you want them to write. Write About This allows students and teachers to create their own writing prompts too. To create a writing prompt you choose picture from your camera roll, type a prompt, then record your voice to go along with the prompt. Prompts and responses to prompts can be shared via email. Sharing via email is disabled by default. Sharing can be activated in the app's settings. The free

version of Write About This contains 50 prompts. The paid version of Write About This (currently priced at \$3.99) has nearly 500 prompts.

BoomWriter (<http://boomwriter.com>) is a collaborative writing tool for students. To start a writing assignment in BoomWriter the teacher selects a story starter either from a database of prompts or they can create their own prompts to distribute to students. Students then individually write what they think should be the next section of the story. After writing their next sections students submit their entries to their teacher. The teacher reviews each submission online before allowing the rest of the class to read it (student names are hidden during this process) vote for the entries that they would like to see included as the next part of the story. Teachers can give feedback/ grades on every student submission to a group BoomWriter project. (*Disclosure: BoomWriter is an advertiser on FreeTech4Teachers.com*)

Scholastic Story Starters (<http://bitly.com/1Hdeswf>) is a great tool that students will enjoy using to create short, creative fiction stories. Scholastic Story Starters offers four story themes; fantasy, adventure, sci-fi, and scrambler. To create a story on Story Starters a student picks a theme, enter his or her name, chooses his or her grade, and spins the big wheels of prompts. The student can spin the wheels until he or she finds a prompt he or she likes. After the prompt is selected the student can write his or her story using the letter, postcard, notebook, or newspaper format provided by Scholastic Story Starters. When the story is finished it can be printed.

Story Map (<http://bitly.com/1dY5K8Q>) is a free interactive story planning tool from Read Write Think. Story Maps provides four templates for outlining stories. To use the templates students title their stories then choose one of four templates to outline their stories. The four template choices are conflict, setting, character, and resolution. Students can print their completed templates.

Make Beliefs Comix (<http://makebeliefscomix.com>) is a multilingual comic strip creation service that offers more than 300 comic templates. These printable templates are in addition to the online Make Beliefs Comix creation tool. The templates are divided into dozens of thematic categories including history, holidays, and civil rights. There is even a category of templates titled Emotions which is designed to help students express how they are feeling through comic characters. The printable templates from Make Beliefs Comix could be excellent resources to use as creative writing prompts. Make Beliefs Comix is also available as an iPad app (<http://apple.co/1HayZyG>).

Storyboard That (<http://storyboardthat.com>) provides templates in which you can create your stories in a comic strip style. To help you create your story Storyboard That provides dozens of scenes, characters, and text bubbles to fill your storyboard frames. Each element that you drag into your storyboard frames can be resized, rotated, and re-positioned. Browse the teacher's guides section of Storyboard That for suggested uses at all grade levels. Storyboard That has free and paid plans. The free plan allows you to create three and six frame stories. The free plan also limits you to three storyboards per week. A paid classroom account offers options for managing student accounts, limiting sharing to classroom members only, and a classroom account offers more frames per storyboard.

(Disclosure: Storyboard That is an advertiser on FreeTech4Teachers.com)

Twine (<http://twinery.org>) is an open-source program for writing choose your own adventure stories. You can use Twine online or you can download the software for Mac or Windows. To write a choose your own adventure story with Twine online start by giving your story a title. After titling your story you will be taken to a grid canvas on which you can write short passages in a series of sticky notes. Each sticky note should be given its own title. To link elements of your stories you place brackets around the title of note within a note. Each note can be linked to two or more other notes in your story. When your story is complete you can read through it and click through it in your browser. The aspects of Twine that I like the best is the sticky note nature of the story canvas. The sticky notes make it easy to see the connections between elements of your story.

Storybird (<http://storybird.com>) provides templates and artwork for creating digital stories. To use Storybird you simply select a theme (layout) then drag and drop the drawings you like into your story. Once you've selected drawings for your story, you then write in the text of your story. Using Storybird, anyone can create great-looking digital picture book stories regardless of your drawing skills or lack of drawing skills. Storybird can be used on your iPad.